

Faculty, staff, students and/or employees who wish to engage in any research, demonstration, development, or other activity involving the use of human subjects must have review and approval of that activity by the Institutional Review Board.

IRB Approval: 23 September 2003

I. Title The Spectrum Initiative Longitudinal Study

II. Investigators

1. Lorie Roy, PI, Ph.D., Professor, School of Information, The University of Texas at Austin
Assisted by:
2. Jorge Chavez, Graduate Research Associate, School of Information, The University of Texas at Austin
3. Glendora Johnson-Cooper, Social Sciences Librarian, Arts and Sciences Libraries, University of Buffalo
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III. Hypothesis, Research Questions, or Goals of the Project

The aim of this project is to document the impact of the American Library Association's (ALA) Spectrum Initiative Scholarships to increase the number of information professionals of color.

The primary hypothesis is:

If the American Library Association provides scholarships for students of color to attend ALA accredited master's programs or National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) school library media programs then the number of library professionals of color will increase because this financial aid will be a significant motivator for these students to complete library and information studies programs.

While this primary hypothesis addresses whether the Spectrum Initiative creates an influx in the profession of librarians of color, we are also interested in understanding:

1. What influences whether a person of color chooses a career in library and information studies?
2. How do students of color select a school of library and information studies?
3. What impact has the Spectrum Initiative had on award recipients' beginning professional careers?
4. What impact has the Spectrum Initiative had on award recipients' professional involvement?
5. What might be done to assist students of color to complete their degrees from ALA-accredited master's programs or NCATE school library media programs?
6. How might people of color be recruited into careers in library and information science?

IV. Background and Significance

One of the most crucial issues facing the library and information science (LIS) profession today is that of creating a workforce that reflects the communities that libraries serve. Over one-fourth of the national population consists of individuals from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Yet, the professional workforce in library and information centers continues to struggle to increase the number of ethnic minority librarians. A workforce survey conducted in 1991 by the American Library Association's (ALA) Office of Library Personnel Resources found that 12% of all librarians were African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, or American Indian. In November 1998, ALA's Office of Research and Statistics released results from the ALA Survey of Libraries Salaries, 1998 that indicated that over 85% of the staff in selected academic, public, and school libraries were White. Statistics gathered by the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) noted that fewer than 10% of graduates from LIS schools are people of color.

In 1997, ALA initiated a ground-breaking and innovative attempt at creating a change in the demographics of the workforce when ALA Council approved the expenditure of \$1.35 million toward the Spectrum Initiative. The Spectrum Initiative is a program combining financial support with mentoring in a process of fast-tracking scholars into their careers and into professional activities. Financial support is in the form of \$5,000 scholarships, initially awarded on a competitive basis each year for three years to fifty individual to apply to the expenses associated with obtaining a master's degree from an ALA-accredited program or an NCATE-accredited school library media certification. Varying numbers of Spectrum Scholars have been selected in subsequent years. Applications are accepted from individuals from the four largest underrepresented groups, or students who define their ethnicity as African American or African Canadian; Asian or Pacific Islander; Latino or Hispanic; and Native People of the United States or Canada. The Spectrum Initiative also includes a national recruitment network, a mentoring program for current scholars, and a leadership institute for Scholars. Spectrum Scholarships have been awarded to 227 students since 1999. As the Spectrum Initiative reaches its fifth year, there is great interest among ALA members, staff, and others in the information professions in determining the impact of this program.

V. Research Methods, Design, and Proposed Statistical Analysis

The research approach includes gathering, analyzing, and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data on the Spectrum Scholars. These data will be gathered through an annual survey of all Scholars and in-depth life history interviews of ten percent of the Scholars.

VI. Human Subject Interactions

A. Sources of Potential Participants, Derived Materials, or Data

Participants in this study include individuals who have received Spectrum Initiative Scholarships from the American Library Association. Scholars are from traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups. Scholars have received bachelors degrees and are or have been enrolled in an ALA-accredited master's program or ALA-accredited National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) school library media program. Scholarships were awarded to both male and female students whose ages potentially range from 22 to 60 years. All Scholars are English-

language proficient.

We also plan to pretest the instrument in a sample (no more than ten) of current or recent library and information studies students who share the demographics of Spectrum Scholars. These students are known to the Principal Investigator in her role as an educator or through her involvement in professional activities, including service to the American Library Association and service on advisory boards. This includes individuals who have completed coursework (or are currently enrolled) at the University of Arizona and the University of Texas at Austin. We will also invite ALA's Diversity Officer, Ms. Tracie Hall, to review the instrument as well as members of the now-dissolved Spectrum Initiative Steering Committee and several library and information science faculty members who are involved in research on diversity. Those involved in pretesting the instrument will ask to evaluate the instrument for clarity and organization. Pre-test respondents may also help identify additional responses for selected questions and provide estimates of the respondent burden.

We will continue to contact scholars annually to record their career progression.

B. Procedures for the Recruitment of the Participants

The survey instrument will be housed on the Web site for ALA's Office for Diversity. We will include a non-fillable copy of the instrument on a Web site housed on a School of Information server as a service to the research community. The fillable survey will be located on the secure ALA site to safeguard the data. Invitations will be sent to Spectrum Scholars to visit the site and complete the questionnaire. These invitations will also include the text of the Informed Consent to Participate in Research form, which will also appear on the ALA Office for Diversity and School of Information Web sites.

Each annual Spectrum cohort has an electronic list that is managed by the ALA's Office for Diversity. We will post invitations to participate on each of these lists. The Office for Diversity has informed us that they have contact information for approximately 185 of the 227 Scholars. We will also seek contact information for the 32 students who are not communicating on the electronic lists. We will do this by asking other Scholars and faculty at schools of library and information science to ask Scholars to provide the Office for Diversity with contact information and to view the survey. We will distribute paper copies of the instrument to any Scholar who requests one.

C. Procedure for Obtaining Informed Consent

The Spectrum Initiative Steering Committee requested this study and specifically assigned it to Dr. Roy, the Principal Investigator. She served on the Steering Committee, attended all four the Spectrum Leadership Institutes (1999-2002), served on the Spectrum Leadership Institute Planning Committee, and on one of Spectrum Initiative Juries to select Spectrum Scholars. She has met many of the scholars and has been introduced at each Spectrum Leadership Institute as the person who will be conducting the longitudinal study.

Spectrum Scholars will be asked to complete a consent form prior to completing the survey form

and/or participating in a life history interview. A copy of the participant consent form is appended to this application. Scholars will be able to affirm their consent on the Web version of the survey instrument. In addition to affirming their consent, completed questionnaires also provide evidence of implicit consent.

Note that the application to the Spectrum Initiative identifies three requirements: students who receive a Spectrum Scholarship must be (1) willing to participate in a Spectrum Initiative Longitudinal Study; (2) willing to complete a brief annual report about the scholar's experiences and progress; and (3) willing to attend an all expenses paid Spectrum (leadership) Institute. Thus, all Spectrum Scholars are aware that they are expected to participate in this longitudinal study. The consent forms will, however, affirm that participation in this study is voluntary.

D. Research Protocol

We will gather data through several processes. All project partners have been involved in the design of the survey instrument which will be available on the Web. The Web version of the survey instrument will be designed to reduce respondent effort by reducing the number of key strokes needed to enter a response. For many questions respondents will be able to select a response category by clicking on a radio button. Skip patterns will be incorporated in the design to direct respondents to relevant questions.

All current and former Spectrum Scholars will be invited to complete a questionnaire. Selected Scholars will be invited to participate in in-depth life history interviews. Students will be directed to the survey instrument through several means. The PI alone will conduct all in-depth interviews to ensure consistency across life history interviews. The ALA Office for Diversity will forward completed survey data sets to Dr. Roy for analysis and evaluation.

Project partners will code and input data from the surveys into data files for statistical analysis using SPSS. Project partners will prepare results in whole number responses, rankings (when appropriate) and cross-tabulations (chi-square) between variables, especially between demographics and relevant questions. They will code responses to open-ended questions for content and also analyzed. They will present results from the questionnaires in aggregate and will not identify individual respondents. Text of the life-history interviews will serve to add rich data to the study. No personal identification will be included in the results. A copy of both the survey questionnaire and the questions in the life history interviews are appended.

The life history interviews will allow Dr. Roy to gather rich data. These interviews will be conducted according to the following protocol.

1. A purposive sample of Spectrum Scholars will be invited to participate in the life-history interviews. Scholars selected to receive these invitations include scholars residing geographically close to the Principal Investigator's resident in Austin, Texas or geographically close to locations where she travels to attend conferences or meetings. Interviewees will be students or graduates of 8 to 10 different graduate programs. ALAs Diversity Office lists publicly the names of the Scholars and the schools they are or have attended. Dr. Roy will locate email addresses of these scholars through University directories and the Diversity Office.

During these interviews, Dr. Roy will ask the Scholar to provide a narrative structure of their lives, their experiences as Spectrum Scholars, and their career and professional experiences and plans. A copy of the Life History Interview Questions is appended. Note that she may also use probing or clarification/follow-up questions within an interview. She anticipates that each interview will take one to two hours. Dr. Roy will tape record the interviews in comfortable and accessible locations.

Dr. Roy and Mr. Chavez will transcribe the interviews. Since Mr. Chavez is a current School of Information student he will not transcribe interviews of any student he might know. Also, Scholars may request that only Dr. Roy transcribe their interviews. Dr. Roy will analyze the interviews to identify categories of meaning, also referred to as meaning units or chunks of meaning. She will identify major themes across interviews and listen for nuclear episodes (key events). Narratives may be categorized by (1) dominant social narratives; (2) counter narratives; (3) shadow or impacting narratives; and/or (4) silent or unspoken narrative themes.

Scholars may request transcripts of their interviews. Dr. Roy will store the audio tapes in her personal collection and will not disclose the names of those who participated in life-history interview or their responses.

Dissemination of the results will take several forms. We will prepare a written report for ALA's Office for Diversity. We will submit proposals to present our findings as an ALA poster session, at the ALA Diversity Fair, and the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). We will pursue submitting a monograph proposal to ALA Editions as well as publications to ALA's journal, American Libraries. With ALA's permission, we may also seek other publication venues.

VII. Potential Risks

A. Participants may feel that some questions on the survey or in the life-history interview are sensitive. Since respondents may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, they may decline to answer and question they find threatening.

B. Confidentiality of the survey results may be compromised due to 'hacking' of the ALA Office for Diversity Web site or through errors in forwarding survey results to Dr. Roy. This will be mitigated by testing the process and working closely with the ALA Web master. The fillable survey instrument will be available only on a secure site. Scholars may also request that the instrument be sent to them in print form.

C. Confidentiality of the life-history interviews may be compromised if others have access to the audio tapes and/or transcripts. Dr. Roy will reduce this risk by careful storage of these materials in locked locations until the tapes are destroyed.

VIII. Potential Benefits

Results from this study will inform the membership of ALA and the professional at large of the impact of the Spectrum Initiative. Results may provide insights into recruitment issues, the role of mentoring, and the socialization of early professionals. The Spectrum Scholars themselves may benefit from the reflective nature of the research process as well as contributing to the

process of documenting the Spectrum Initiative.

Upon request, Spectrum Scholars participating in the life-history interviews may request a copy of a professional publication such as Valerie Yow's Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994) in compensation for the additional time they expend on participating in these interviews.

IX. Sites or Agencies Involved in the Research Project

American Library Association, Office for Diversity

X. Review by Another IRB

This project has not been previously reviewed.